

the RARS

Exciter

Raleigh Amateur Radio Society



Worldwide Friendship

July, 2001
Number 369

**First Hole in the Wall
for New Antenna Path
at the State EOC**

**Another
Successful
ARES
'Drill'!**



The Exciter

The **Exciter** is the monthly newsletter of the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society. It is available in both printed and electronic form. The printed version is mailed to members just before each club meeting. The electronic form, in Adobe Acrobat PDF format, is e-mailed about a week earlier.

We solicit both articles and advertising. The deadline for submissions is the 15th of the prior month. Contact the Editor.

The views contained in the Exciter are those of the individual authors, and are not necessarily the views of the Editor, or the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society.

The Raleigh Amateur Radio Society

The Raleigh Amateur Radio Society, Inc. (RARS) was founded in 1969 and continues to serve and support the Amateur Radio community in the greater Triangle area. In 1999, we incorporated a new RARS, and obtained 501(c)(3) Non-Profit tax status.

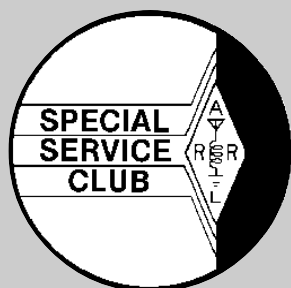
The objectives of the club are to promote worldwide friendship through Amateur Radio; to be of public service by providing radio communications in times of disaster, emergency, or civic need; to educate members in radio technique; and to provide training classes to assist in obtaining Amateur Radio licenses.

Anyone interested in Amateur Radio is eligible to apply for membership. Dues for regular licensed amateurs are \$18.00 per year (from July 1 through June 30). Additional immediate family members pay \$5.00 each per year. Dues for licensed amateurs older than 59 or younger than 16 are \$12.00 per year. Dues for non-licensed Associate members are \$9.00 per year.

Applications for membership may be obtained from the treasurer, or the RARS web site (www.rars.org).

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President's Corner

Tim Nicholson KF4RTX

It's hard to believe that the year is half over. Independence Day is upon us, a time for reflecting on the freedoms that we have in this great country. Freedom of speech. Freedom of religion. Freedom of choice. Freedom of radio.

Wait a minute! Freedom of radio? That's not in the Constitution is it? Well, not technically, but we have been given privileges by the government to use portions of the radio spectrum. And that's freedom to me. Unfortunately, the right to our radio spectrum isn't guaranteed like our rights found in the Constitution (and one could argue that even those aren't fully guaranteed, but since this isn't a political publication, we won't

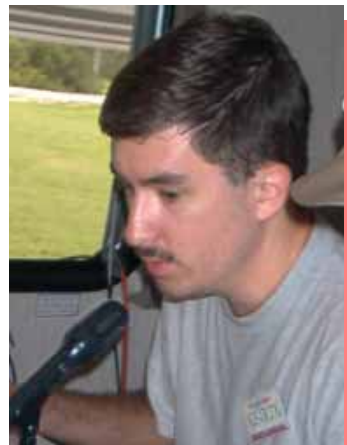
discuss that here). What can we do to protect these rights? Use the spectrum and keep amateur radio in front of our legislators.

Using the spectrum is easy, right? Actually, I've found it to be pretty tough. Time has been my biggest adversary to getting on the HF bands. I am sure a lot of you will say the same thing. Lately, I have been trying to make just a few minutes of time a week to get on the HF bands, and I use VHF and UHF during my drive times. I wish I could do more, but for now, that will have to be my contribution to preserving my rights in amateur radio. I challenge each of you to find a few minutes each week to use a band or frequency that you don't normally use (just be sure you are licensed for it). Experiment with PSK or try APRS. Brush up on CW and make a contact. Use a repeater you have never used before. You never know whom you'll meet!

I have never been very vocal to my legislators about ham radio issues. As with HF, I never found the time to sit down and write my local, state and federal officials. But I can stay silent no longer. Too many of our frequencies are being taken and auctioned off to the highest bidder. I need to make time to let my concerns be made known to my government representatives, and I hope you will join me.

So, in between the fireworks and hamburgers this 4th of July, please take time to turn on your ham radios and make a contact. Then, turn to your computer, typewriter, or notepad and write your legislators telling them what ham radio means to you and to your community. We can make a big difference if we all take the time to make our voices heard, both on the air and in government.

73 and Happy Independence Day!



Tune In The RARS NEWS HOUR

• Newsline
• ARRL Audio News
• R.A.I.N Report

Sunday Nights following the
RARS 8:00 Net on 146.64

Skywarn Net Controls Meet, Eat and Learn in Raleigh

Gary Pearce KN4AQ



Central Carolina SKYWARN got a boost from 25 hams who attended a Net Control meeting and training session at the NWS office in Raleigh on May 29. After feasting on pizza, the hams, who came from all across the area, got down to business.

Thomas Babb KF4JKQ, Central Carolina SKYWARN EC, said that it has been a fairly quiet winter and spring so far, so it's been hard to keep Net Control stations focused on the weather. In recent activations, he has

sometimes reached the bottom of the call up list without finding anyone available to run a net. The addition of several new Net Control stations should help solve that problem. He emphasized that SKYWARN Net Control operators need to keep their net control skills sharp by running other nets (like the RARS 8:00 net - see Net Manager Bill Cole KG4CXY). With hurricane season and the summer storm season underway, SKYWARN can expect to see more activity.

SKYWARN is adding APRS equipment to the **Raleigh Weather** amateur station at the NWS office. Assistant EC Greg Johnson KG4AWG explained that APRS is a packet-based network operating on 144.39 MHz. Its main feature is



George Lemons

position reporting, and APRS software creates maps that show the location of fixed and GPS-equipped mobile stations. Of particular interest to SKYWARN and the NWS are the hams who have installed high quality weather stations at their homes, and connected them for automatic reporting via APRS. This gives the NWS instant access to many more reporting points for wind speed and direction, barometric pressure, and rainfall amount. APRS will also provide another path for live reports from operators, and eventually the NWS APRS station will be set up to broadcast weather info, watches and warnings. Greg added that the area needs more APRS-equipped ham operators, and more wide area digipeaters to fill in holes in rural territory.

Several NWS Meteorologists addressed the group. Gail Hartsfield thanked the hams for their participation. She said our reports are used both to verify warnings that have been broadcast, and to fill in information that the radar can't provide, based on ground observation as storms pass through the area. Severe storm warnings are often issued after Amateur Radio spotters report significant hail or wind damage from a developing storm. Gail also said that while there are other spotters (public safety/police, and some general public), hams provide the majority of the spotter reports. Hams truly are the eyes of the NWS during storms.

Joel Cline talked about his specialty - hurricanes. See the next article for Joel's plea.

And our primary SKYWARN contact at the NWS, Warning Coordination Meteorologist George Lemons, said that few areas of the country have SKYWARN operations as well organized as we do here. All of his warning area is covered by one of several nets in the Triangle, Triad and Sandhills areas. Then George spoke in even more human terms about the need for SKYWARN spotters. He said that all the forecasters at the NWS office had plenty of input from computers - computer screens surround them all the time. But the computers don't issue warnings. Humans do. And they need information from other humans to do their best job.



Gail Hartsfield

Skywarn coverage continued on page 7

PUBLIC SERVICE CALENDAR

For details visit www.rars.org/public-service

or call Bill KG4CXY at 469-0785

MS-150 Bike Tour

September 8th-9th

Contact: To Be Determined

Familias Del Pueblo Road Race

September 9th

Contact: Ralph Embrey KF4NIR
kf4nir@aol.com

Light the Night Walk

September 20th

Contact: Karl Ulrich K4LNX
k4lnx@arrl.net

Duke Liver Center Triathlon

September 30th

Contact: Jim Walter KG4FIJ
jwalter@nc.rr.com

American Red Cross - NC State Fair

October 12th-21st

Contact: John Guerriero KG4HDT
kg4hdt@arrl.net

Dayton

Gary Pearce KN4AQ

Dayton.

To most people, it's just an obscure, medium size city in Ohio. Didn't the Wright brothers build their airplane there?

To hams, even hams who have never been there, the name means one thing. The world's biggest hamfest. By far. The people who put it on call it "Hamvention®", but everyone else calls it the Dayton hamfest, or just "Dayton". It draws around 28,000 hams, and if something exists in ham radio, you'll probably find it there.

I'd been to Dayton - the hamfest - before. The last time was in 1978 or 79, when I was living in Chicago. For each of the past few years, I'd considered going again, but I was put off by the planning and logistics. You have to book a motel a year in advance. You can't park there. It's impossible to get in and out. And the crowd is just too thick. But this year I was invited to come and meet with



my colleagues on the ARRL PR committee. I didn't really have the time, but I decided to go anyway. Another road trip, another chance to play HF mobile.

The first trick was getting a motel room. Book a motel two weeks before Dayton? I'll be lucky to find room in Cincinnati or Columbus. But I dialed up the internet, looked at a few major chains, and found a room in Miamisburg, just a few miles south of town. What's the big problem? When I checked in, I found out how lucky I'd been. I happened to do my search the day that rooms that had been reserved months before, but not confirmed, had been released. A day earlier or later and I'd be... in Cincinnati.

I did a bunch of web research on the Hamvention web site. All the forums were listed, and, although the exhibit hall and flea market are the big draws for most people, the "critical mass" of hams at Dayton makes for well-attended forums on a wide variety of topics. I wondered if I'd get to see the flea market at all?

I also checked out parking and access to the Hara Arena, the Hamvention site. When I was there in the 70's, I had been able to park on the grounds, but barely. Not any more. The arena is surrounded by a huge parking lot, but it is completely dedicated to the flea market, and to parking for the trucks that bring the exhibits in and out. Over the past years, I've read horror stories about access and parking.

This year, parking was arranged at two malls, with shuttle bus service. The \$2 bus fare included unlimited rides back and forth, so if you bought a big box and didn't want to carry it around all day you could take it back to your car. This sounded like trouble, but the alternative was parking in private grass lots that turn to mud if it rains. And at Dayton, it always rains.

Then there's the admission price: \$16.50 in advance, or \$22 at the

gate. The ticket is good for all three days - Dayton runs all day on Friday and Saturday, and till 2 PM Sunday. Another \$5 for the fancy program. Those who think Charlotte's \$8 entry is overpriced might have a problem here. And you can't get a one-day ticket.

Armed with information and a motel reservation (but no advanced ticket), I headed out Thursday morning. Dayton is about a 10-hour drive from Raleigh. A bunch of guys from the Triad pool together and charter a bus, which could be fun. I yakked on the radio a lot during the trip, but mostly on two and six-meter FM. HF was pretty dead. Thursday morning, both EastCars and MidCars were full of mobiles heading to Dayton from all compass points, but by afternoon even 40 meters had faded. Didn't the solar-gods know this was DAYTON!?! Crossing into southeastern Ohio, still more than 100 miles from the city, I began to see other ham vehicles all pointed west. Traffic picked up on 146.52 simplex, and the chatter kept up for the rest of the trip.

About 40 miles out, I began hearing the first actual sounds of the hamfest - the 146.94 talk-in. It was non-stop questions, answers and directions, and would remain so for the next three days, even late at night. It was fascinating, and a bit frustrating, to listen to. The parking situation was the most popular topic, and net control repeated the same refrain every few minutes: no, there is no parking at the arena. Yes, we have parking at two malls, with shuttle busses that cost \$2/day. Yes, there is parking in the grass lots across the street, but it's not controlled or recommended by the Hamvention. And 30 seconds later, someone would call net control and ask if there were parking on the arena grounds.

The net control stations did a generally good job. They handled a very high volume of radio traffic, and some problems I'll describe in a moment, and almost never lost their cool despite the redun-





dant and sometimes just plain stupid requests from the mass of hams arriving in town. My only complaint is that they did not always have some basic information at their fingertips, and a few too many questions were answered with "I think" and "I guess". For example, the Thursday afternoon net control did not know what times the busses would start running from the malls in the morning, and Saturday afternoon they didn't have good information on bus schedules to the main banquet.

But I'll grant them a pass on that because of the way they handled their main problem. The large audience on the Dayton talk-in repeater is too tempting a target for the small number of social misfits in our hobby who can't resist the radio equivalent of dropping their pants and mooning the crowd. Taunts, catcalls, bogus requests, profanity and other bad behavior (but very little outright jamming) plagued the repeater off and on all weekend, and grew especially bad at night. The net controls steadfastly ignored it all, occasionally overriding the more onerous malcontents with a bulletin about parking or forum schedules. Net control's signal was clearly designed to be strong enough to override any other signal on the repeater.

Finally, I arrived, found my motel and settled in for the night. The parking lot was filled with antennas - my motel looked like a small hamfest all its own.

Friday morning, and time to see how bad the mall-bus confusion would be. On Friday, the flea market opened at 8, while the inside exhibits opened at 9. I did not have an advanced ticket, and I generally don't need to find the first bargain in the flea market, so I planned for a more leisurely 10 AM arrival. I found the mall with no trouble (following directions I'd heard at least 100 times in the past 14 hours). Hamfest parking was in the back of the Salem Mall, which was maybe a little bigger than North Hills Mall,

but had lots more parking. At the peak, there was room for still more hams. Busses were moving in and out quickly. The line to get a bus ticket looked long at first, but it moved quickly, too. It took about 10 minutes from the time I parked to the time I was riding out on the bus.

Once I was at the hamfest, there was only a short line to fork over my \$22 (I skipped the program), and I was in. And it started to rain.

Rain is a Dayton tradition. Until a few years ago, Dayton was in mid-April, and it was always a cold rain. Then they moved to late May, and it became a warmer rain. This year, it was a downpour that lasted all day Friday. Stalwarts stalked the flea market, but the rest of us weenies crammed ourselves into the overcrowded exhibit halls, to the delight of the exhibitors.

The Hara Arena began as a basketball arena, and hosted big-name concerts over the past decades. More exhibit hall buildings were added in a fairly haphazard arrangement, and today the hamfest spreads across four large buildings and spills into a hallway. It's a confusing maze, and when it's crowded, it takes forever to get from one side to the other, only to find that the exhibitor you thought was over *here* is really over *there*. Maybe I should have bought a program - it had some nice floor layouts. The arena itself is showing its age, and looking a little run down. There are rumors that the Hamvention will move next year.

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Making a Difference

The story of RARS members who lead, volunteer, participate, in their own words

It's a SAG Life

Don Downs WA4AVU

What were we thinking? Cathy (KA3QPU) and I signed up to help with the ADA bike-a-thon, thinking that it would be a lot of fun. But that was before we got up at "oh-dark-thirty" on a Saturday morning! By Sunday night, though, we were glad we volunteered.

The operator's meeting before the event is not usually very exciting, especially when most of the volunteers are half asleep. We did have one bit of excitement, however, when a powered paraglider flew over. Poor Gary (KN4AQ) had to delay his talk when he realized everyone was engrossed in watching the paraglider instead of paying attention to our instructions.

After the meeting, all of us Support and Gear (SAG) drivers headed for the course. Being a SAG is not a terribly difficult job-just drive the course between your assigned points, looking for cyclists who need as-

sistance. I think the most difficult part is driving the course backwards. Not wanting to repeat my experience from last year's MS-150 (when we missed a turn and spent over an hour trying to find the course again), I borrowed a GPS receiver for this event. As we passed each turn, Cathy marked the location in the GPS receiver. Sure enough, Saturday morning we missed a turn while backtracking. While I was trying to figure out how to get the GPS receiver to give us a bearing to the last turn we successfully made, Cathy picked up our NC map, located our position, and determined that we could turn right, go about ¼ mile, and be back on course. Oh well... so much for technology!

I was impressed by how quickly the cyclists began to recognize the SAG vehicles. As we approached stopped riders,

they would either start flagging us down or wave us on-usually with a "thumbs up" sign. We got a lot of "thumbs up" signs on Saturday!



Here's Don WA4AVU and Cathy KA3QPU taking a lunch break from SAGing on the tour.

(KD4ZVW) had not only marked the route, but they also outlined road kill with yellow "crime scene" paint. At one point, they had drawn the outline of a human body in the middle of the road, much to the amusement of the cyclists! When we were ready to leave, I discovered that I'd left the headlights on and run the battery down so low that it couldn't power our mobile radio, much less start the car. Fortunately, John (KG4HDT) was there to jump start us. (Mental note: I need a new battery!)

By 4:00, most of the riders had finished, and only a few SAGs remained on the course. We stopped to refuel, and while we were pumping gas, we saw a cyclist leave the course and go to a grocery store. Liz (KF4UQZ) chased him down and found out that he was one of the lead cyclists. He had ridden into town to eat dinner and "get some exercise." (He'd only ridden about 89 miles

At one point, we came across a pack of cyclists fixing a tire. As I approached the group, one of the riders asked, "Are you an expert in flat repair?" When I replied that I wasn't, he said, "Oh, well. We've got 14 people here, surely we can manage!" We did get to assist, though, by supplying an air pump.

Early in the afternoon, we stopped at a rest stop and got out to stretch a bit. While we were there, a number of cyclists told us how much they enjoyed the course markings. Jeff (AC4ZO) and Bobbie

that day!)

While we were resting before dinner, Gary put out a call to see how we all felt about moving dinner up half an hour. The vote was unanimous-everyone on frequency was hungry! The "ham dinner" was fun, and we enjoyed meeting many of the RARS club members-especially since Cathy and I are new to the club and don't know many folks yet.

Sunday morning, Cathy attended the operator's meeting while I installed a radio in the supply truck. Then Cathy, who would spend the day riding with the woman driving the supply truck (an all-female supply truck crew!), left to begin supplying the rest stops.

Sunday turned out to be an entirely different experience from Saturday. Not only were the riders scheduled to ride about 10 more miles, but they also were met with a headwind that would be with them all day.

Shortly after I began SAGging, I was flagged down by a couple of riders. They had been "drafting" each other when one cyclist got too close, bumped the bike ahead of him, and crashed. He had scraped his head and damaged his wheel. (Of course, he was more concerned about the wheel). Fortunately, both the mechanic and the medic were just one rest stop away. After a short visit at the rest stop, he was ready to go-with a bandaged head and a repaired bike.

Due to the high winds (up to 35 mph gusts) on the bridges, several SAG wagons were dispatched to carry riders across the bridges. At first, I wished I could be in that group, as it sounded more fun than just driving around. I kept very busy SAGging riders, though. Usually, I would carry them up to the next rest stop, where another SAG would continue to move them forward. Eventually, I wound up with a full load and was asked to carry them to the finish line. After that run, I joined the group of SAGs moving riders across two bridges and a construction zone.

As I was loading one bike, I heard someone say, "I guess you're getting to know that bike pretty well!" It turned out to be the first guy I SAGged in the morning! By the end of the ride, I had had my fill of putting bikes on and off the roof carrier on our van, and I was very thankful that I hadn't been SAGging riders across the bridges all day!

One of the unexpected challenges was keeping track of the mechanic's location. Mike (KC4WUH), who had been riding with Charles (KG4MXV), offered to ride with the mechanic to ease this problem. Naturally, Mike's unofficial tactical call sign quickly became "Mike and the Mechanic." ☺

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SAG Life continued from page 6

About the time I finished up, Cathy returned from picking up supplies from the rest stops. Many folks had already left for home, but a few of us decided to go to dinner in Manteo. Vince (KF4ZMV) and Anne scouted out the local restaurants. They found lots of places that were closed and a German restaurant that was open.

On the drive home, we used simplex for light banter (including Gary's updates on his 20 meter mobile DX QSOs) to keep us all awake. (Well, maybe the sugar and caffeine helped, too!)

We arrived in the Raleigh area around 11:30 Sunday night. There was some discussion of going to Goodberry's, but common sense prevailed, and we all went straight home.

Overall, it was a fun two days. If you've never participated in one of these events, you don't know how much fun you're missing! We also felt appreciated-I think every rider I SAGged thanked me for volunteering. Before the event, one of Gary's messages said that the hams who participate usually return home "feeling very good and very tired." Cathy and I agree that he was right on both counts.

Do you have a story from a public service or ARES activity? Share it with your club by sending it to the Exciter Editor!

IT'S THE WATER - Joel Cline's Hurricane Message

Gary Pearce KN4AQ



Joel Cline at WX4NC with Paul Folmsbee K5PF

Joel Cline, hurricane specialist at the NWS office in Raleigh, is on a crusade. His mission is to make everyone in North Carolina understand that the danger from hurricanes isn't the wind - it's the water.

Specifically, it's the flooding, caused by - and please remember this statistic - one quarter to one half your total annual rainfall accumulating in just six to eight hours. Far more

people are killed by driving into flooded areas after a hurricane than by wind related damage during the hurricane passage.

Joel says that TV stations love to send camera crews to the coast to send back pictures of wind-whipped reporters, flapping signs and street lights, the occasional demolished gas station overhang and big ocean swells. But even there, the greater danger is from storm surge flooding, not the wind. Here in the Triangle, the story is at the Neuse River bridges, at Crabtree Creek, and anywhere water covers the road or a bridge. And it's not your average rainstorm flooding - a few inches of water ponding across the road. It's water with a current. Rapidly moving water that can sweep a car into the stream long before it reaches the legendary two-foot level. And the story is people who drive into the flood, feeling protected by their heavy car, the way they always do after a heavy rain.

How do you get people to understand that this isn't just a heavy rain? It's a quarter of the whole year's rain, falling overnight! Joel would like to see the media change the focus from the "eye" symbol to the rain bands that surround the hurricane.

As for SKYWARN, Joel says stay safe - stay inside. He wouldn't mind if people forgot that admonition to fill up your gas tank before the storm. There won't be any hail, and the NWS isn't particularly worried about the hurricane-generated tornados. The tornado reports are generally exaggerated (everybody hears a "freight train" when the wind is 60+ mph outside). Measured wind speed is good information. Afterward, they want to collect recorded wind speed, rainfall amount, and lowest atmospheric pressure. And everybody's rain gauge will underreport the rain, because the rain is coming sideways. But mostly, report the flooding, because IT'S THE WATER that kills people. Did we mention that you'll get 100 day's worth of rain in just a few hours?

meeting in Raleigh, along with his assistant EC Tracker Vordemberge. Buddy said that the Sandhills operation depends on local nets operating throughout the area, reporting weather back to the main net on the Broadway repeater.

As a new operation, Sandhills SKYWARN needs help and Net Controls from the Raleigh area from time to time. And Triangle hams driving south through Lee and Chatham counties and farther south should monitor 147.105 when severe weather is in the area.



Buddy Sanders KG4ABZ

FAYETTEVILLE SKYWARN Becomes SANDHILLS SKYWARN

Fayetteville SKYWARN, a spin-off net from the Raleigh operation that has used the Fayetteville 146.91 repeater for several years, has grown. Now called Sandhills SKYWARN, the net has moved to the wide-area Broadway repeater on 147.105, and covers almost all the counties in the southern half of the Raleigh NWS office warning area. Sandhills SKYWARN EC Buddy Sanders KG4ABZ attended the Net Control



This County Hunter map shows how Dayton attracts hams from far and wide. Bert WA4TLI from Cary put the red pin into Wake County.

The commercial booths and exhibits were overwhelming. I swear that everyone with any connection with ham radio, everyone with a little 1/8 page ad in **QST** or **CQ**, had a booth. And the big guys - Icom, Kenwood, Yaesu - were huge. But for all that, there was very little that was new. Kenwood had a prototype HT, the TH-F6A, a small tri-bander with 144, 220 and 440 MHz, and a multimode receiver that covers 100 kHz to 1300 MHz, that was making a splash with the 220 crowd. And Ten-Tec had a new VHF-UHF all-mode. For Dayton, where major product announcements are routine, this was a fizzle. An Icom rep said that the aborted T-82 multiband HT was not abandoned, just going back for reengineering. It will need a lot of that

to compete with the Kenwood F6.

I'm one of the few hams who actually attend hamfests for forums. I'm often bemused that a few dozen of us will be listening to an FCC talk or making ARES plans, while hundreds or thousands of hams will be out combing the flea market for another coax connector. That's the way it is, but at Dayton, there are still hundreds of hams to spread out among the forums that covered APRS, antennas, QRP, DX, lightning/grounding, AMSAT, ARRL, Collins, Drake/Antique tubes... and on and on. For a forum goer, the problem was that there were four rooms going at once, and I had to make a few tough choices.

The FCC forum reflected the "not much new" tone set on the exhibit floor. Riley Hollingsworth K4DZH and Bill Cross W3TN said that last year's restructuring has gone well. Ham radio is still growing, but very slowly. The "next big thing", coming up over the next few years, will be refarming frequencies following restructuring (see inset).

Since I'm a ham radio instructor, I attended a couple of forums featuring Gordon West WB6NOA of "Radio School" fame. Gordo has a lot of tricks and techniques to keep students interested, including using lots of props. His goal is eradication of the dry-as-toast delivery of the old-line of ham instructors.

There were four forum rooms. Three were together along one hallway, and one large one was curtained off behind one exhibit hall. The large one suffered a lot of competition from noise and music coming from exhibitor displays, and the lights were out. Some portable spotlights made do, but tended to



N8VES wins the weird hat competition. He even made the front page of the Dayton paper.



Gordon West WB6NOA demonstrates Skywave propagation with the help of a nerf ball and the ceiling.

FCC EXPECTS HAM CONSENSUS ON SPECTRUM REFORMING

Before last year's Amateur license class restructuring took effect, the ARRL filed comments with the FCC that went far beyond what the Commission finally enacted. The League suggested upgrading everyone with a Novice or Tech Plus into a General license, anyone with an Advanced into an Amateur Extra, and reorganizing the spectrum to eliminate the sub-bands of the deleted classes, distributing the spectrum among those that were left.

The FCC only went as far as eliminating new Novice, Tech Plus and Advanced licenses. The classes themselves still exist in a kind of twilight zone, nobody was upgraded, and the sub-bands remain intact.

In the FCC forum at the Dayton Hamvention, Bill Cross W3TN suggested that over the next year or two, the other shoe will drop, and the Amateur spectrum will be reformed. At that point, he said, there will be so few Novices that nobody will care if they are upgraded.

But, he said, the FCC has no interest in imposing a new spectrum plan on hams. He could do it, but we wouldn't like it. He expects hams to come up with the plan themselves, and reach broad consensus on it. He also expects such a plan to look forward to new technologies.

Cross pointed out that the last significant change in Amateur voice technology occurred in the 1950's, with the switch from AM to SSB. Commercial radio markets have gone well beyond the experimental stage with several digital modulation techniques, and he expects there is much more digital in the future of Amateur communications. But he cautioned that we should not attempt to put detailed band plans into the rules. The rules need to allow flexibility in Amateur operation. Most hams haven't thought much about it, but the ARRL already has committees working on proposals.

Also looking ahead, Cross said the World Radio Conference in 2003 will likely have some significant changes for ham radio. The most well know is the likelihood of dropping Morse code as an international treaty requirement for an HF Ham license. Cross expects that there will be some serious battles on that issue in the US. Other WRC items will be a hoped-for expansion of the worldwide 40 meter band, referred to as "harmonizing" the band, or making it the same worldwide, a shift in callsign prefix assignments, and an elimination of the "banned country" rule.

Next, it was Riley Hollingsworth's turn to speak about his area - enforcement. Hollingsworth said his two biggest problems were: California and stupidity. Ten Meter incursions would be third. He said that enforcement complaints are down in the past year, but that will just mean more attention to tougher cases, not less enforcement.

He also repeated a note he's sounded since he began speaking at hamfests two years ago: there is considerable pressure on our frequencies from commercial interests. Hams need to be constantly aware of how we sound on the air. He played a tape of a couple of typical 80 meter yahoos, and said that while they did nothing illegal, if that tape were played in Congress, how likely would they be to look favorably on protecting the Amateur service?

A personal note: I was particularly fascinated to note a change in attitude between the FCC representatives today and in the 70's. Back then, I recall listening to John Johnston W4BE and feeling the stern and indifferent hand of government oversight. Bill and Riley, by contrast, felt warm and caring, two men who are a part of the service they administer, who care personally about what happens to it. My impression is probably unfair to John Johnston - that was a long time ago, and I was a young, fairly new ham. I wonder what I'd think if I'd been to Dayton through the 80's, when the FCC was practically ignoring ham radio, particularly in enforcement. I'm sure John Johnston cared, but Bill and Riley felt more like one of us... make that two of us.

RALEIGH WEATHER becomes WX4NC

The Amateur Radio station at the Raleigh NWS office has its own new callsign: WX4NC. You'll hear that call during SKYWARN activations and the Tuesday night 9:30 PM SKYWARN Information Net. The callsign may also be used by the liaison station to NWS operating from home when no ham is sent to the NWS office. Primary identification of SKYWARN stations will still be by tactical callsigns: Net Control and Raleigh Weather. But WX4NC will be another reminder that Amateur Radio is an important part of the weather warning team at the National Weather Service.

blind the audience.

On Saturday, the rain moved off and the hams moved out into the Flea Market. It was actually easier to move around the exhibit hall. I breezed through the flea market, and got the impression that it was huge. Row after row (after row) of the usual bewildering variety of parts and obscure, surplus and junked equipment that makes no sense to me, but seems to be valuable to someone.

On Sunday, the weather turned beautiful. Most two-day hamfests are almost dead on Sunday. On Dayton's third day, it was just a little quieter. I spent most of the morning in forums, but the exhibit hall was still busy (only two deep in front of the popular booths instead of four or six deep), and the flea market was going strong.

If you're thinking about it for next year... make reservations now.

www.hamvention.com

**The Central Carolina
Skywarn Net meets
Tuesday at 9:30 PM
on the 146.88
Repeater**



Thomas Babb KF4JKQ, Skywarn EC, operates the WX4NC station at the National Weather Service

New RARS Logo Products from The Sign Man

The Sign Man has three new RARS Logo items available for sale on his website. The badge (mentioned in the May *Exciter*) and two additional items, the mug and cap are the first examples of our new color logo on wearable (and drinkable?) items. Ask about getting the ARRL logo added to your RARS paraphanalia.

The board has to approve all uses of any RARS logo and they have found these items to be of high quality.



Check out the sign man at www.thesignman.com/clubs/rars.html

or give him a call at 1-888-HAM-TAG1!



Goodbye?

Gary Pearce KN4AQ

It is a little odd, typing this into my computer and not seeing the rest of the *Exciter* around it on my screen.

I wrote most of my *Exciter* articles directly into PageMaker, the program I used to put together the newsletter. I could look around and see another story above, and a picture to the right. More than once I would extend a thought, or abbreviate it, to fit the space I had to fill. (OK, I admit I had to abbreviate a lot more than extend.) But this month, I'm staring at the plain border of Microsoft Word. That's because the July *Exciter* is being built by Karl Ulrich K4LNX. Karl will be your new *Exciter* editor as soon as we elect him (technically) and beginning now (practically). And I am moving on to become the editor of the SERA *Repeater Journal* next year.

I'd like to thank Karl for stepping up so quickly. Karl is a young whippersnapper, a new ham (took the Fall 1999 RARS class, but has already upgraded to Amateur Extra, as of the recent Durham hamfest), and very enthusiastic about ham radio. And he has previous publishing experience. We sat down at my computer to begin assembling this issue, and he just ran with it.

Karl becomes the latest in a long line of distinguished *Exciter* editors. When I arrived in Raleigh a decade ago, Vince AA4MY had been doing the *Exciter* for several years. He passed it on to Mike KN4BS (BS, a great suffix for an editor), then Curt W4CP (who moved to Texas), Walter KM4BU (who also moved to Texas), Israel N4ZVU, Dolly (xyl of W2BYV) who gave it a significant makeover, and me. I built on Dolly's enhancements, and added the magazine style color photo cover. Many more editors came before this group, and maybe that's another

Here's The Sign Man himself, Rick Pourciau NV5A hard at work at Dayton. You can find him at almost every local hamfest, too!

story.

I expected to be doing the *Exciter* a lot longer than this. But last year, Wayne K4MOB, the current *Repeater Journal* editor, approached me at a hamfest and began buttering me up about how great the *Exciter* looked. Then he sprang the idea of having me take on the *Repeater Journal*. He told me why, and a few months later, he told everyone. He had cancer. He's gone through successful surgery, radiation and chemotherapy, but it left him feeling, well, mortal. The *Repeater Journal* is extremely important to Wayne. He's been editing it for over 20 years. He is not handing it over lightly, and I am honored that he thinks I can keep up the tradition.

The *Exciter* has received a lot of praise - not just my issues, but throughout its long history. That's nice, but the *Exciter* is not a work of fiction. It's a chronicle of events. It reflects and preserves the activity and energy of a busy, enthusiastic group of hams, the members of the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society. Without you to report on, the *Exciter* would be just another ham newsletter, with an editor pleading for someone to write something.

Well, this isn't really goodbye. I'm not going anywhere. The *Repeater Journal* headquarters will be right here in Cary, next to the microphone of the Big Base Station that is always tuned to 146.64. I'll still be writing for Karl, taking pictures, and eagerly awaiting the publication of the next RARS *Exciter*. 73.



Hams assist with the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America Run For Research

Joe Zobkiw WA2UZO was our coordinator for this yearly fundrasier. Amateurs volunteering on this event included Tim Nicholson KF4RTX, Mark Freeze WD4KSE, Max G. Bloodworth KO4TV, Bill Cole KG4CXY, Larry C. Holt KG4FIQ, David Sutton KD4BFH, Greg Johnson KG4AWG, Vince Heffron KF4ZMV, Bob Scott KG4IZA and Karl Ulrich K4LNX.

Hope to see you there next year!

Minutes

Club Meeting, June 5th, 2001

The regular meeting of the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society was held on June 5, 2001 at the Forest Hills Baptist Church on Clark Avenue.

The meeting was called to order at 7:33p by President Tim Nicholson, KF4RTX who welcomed 56 members and 2 guests.

Greg, KE4PAX gave the treasurer's report. He said that our membership stands at 334. He also commented that renewal time is upon us, and he is taking renewals tonight.

Then, he presented the 2001-2002 budget to the membership for approval. On motion by KN4AQ, seconded by N4CAE, the budget was approved.

Gary, KN4AQ was next on the podium. He announced that we will not run a summer class this year. He expects that the next class will be in February 2002.

Gary then announced that the June Exciter will be his last issue as Editor. He introduced Karl, K4LNX who will be taking over the job. (Applause)

Next, he said a few words about the SERA Repeater Journal and how to join SERA.

John, KG4HDT said a few words about ARES and how it relates to upcoming Field Day. He distributed flyers aimed at the public. John also announced a statewide ARES drill to be held on Saturday June 30.

AC4ZO said a few words about QSL bureaus, and announced that Murray, AG4BJ has brought some 5.5X7 inch envelopes for anyone needing to send envelopes to the incoming bureau.

At 7:56p, Tim introduced the program for the evening: Field Day, presented by Mike, WA4BPJ.

Door prizes were awarded to: W4BRB, KE4EMY, K4DAM, and N3DWE.

The meeting adjourned at 8:46p.

Jeff Wittich, AC4ZO

Secretary

Board Meeting, May 15th, 2001 - KN4AQ

The meeting was called to order by President Tim KF4RTX.

Treasurer's Report - 331 members. May be some RARSfest transactions not cleared yet.

Bill KG4CXY noted that membership has taken a 10% jump in the past few months, and wonders why? Nobody knew. Bill also asked about where the money was kept. Wondered what the current status of our rules on where money must be kept.

VP Report - Bob K1RCB. Not much. Next meeting program will be on Field Day. Bob got two shelves for the storage locker, one free, one half price, thru Lowes. Not final lock yet. Expects the "closet" will fill quickly.

Committee Reports:

FM - Bernard W4BRB: Bayleaf combination lock was changed, and we were not notified. Bernard sluthed the right people, and got the new combination, and updated names and phone numbers.

We are investigating rebuilding our grounding at Bayleaf. It's not adequate, and Mike WA4BPJ is planning the rework. Alltel will give us info on tying into site ground.

Mike is making progress on rebuilding the RC1000 controller for 220 but not back on the air yet. He analyzed the damage and believes that poor grounding allowed a lightning strike to damage the controller.

The Kenwood repeaters are in. Danny K4ITL is testing them now. There are a few technical decisions to make, and they should be available for installation in a week or two. 444.525 will probably be the first one on.

EDUCATION - Lynn KO4QH. One week ago, Clyde WB2IYC? and W8HYD gave presentation to Boy Scouts in Cary. They were a good team. Also, ARRL

has a special Library book package to be donated to libraries. \$170. Lynn figures there is about \$450 left in the "education donation" made a few years ago. Wants to donate 2 packages.

PUBLIC SERVICE - Bill KG4CXY - it's going great. Chrons & Colitis run in June. Exciter has the Tour de Cure story.

MEMBERSHIP - will have stuff in New Business.

HAMFEST - No change from last month. No final numbers. Hopes to have them next month. Will try to make Hamfest books follow the same fiscal year as the rest of the club, instead of from hamfest to hamfest as it's been done.

KN4AQ noted that the Cap & Badge Man - Dale - died Monday. KF4RTX will take care of RARS condolences.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

KE4PAX expects a \$250 donation from KF4UQZ's company, as a result of the "white paper" from last month. Bob K1RCB wondered if we should add language about what we do with our repeaters.

BUDGET - KE4PAX. Greg prepared report on current year-to-date budgeting. Discussion ensued. Each line item was reviewed.

KG4CXY moved that we approve the budget as amended. KG4CXR seconded. Approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

KG4CXY Bill interested in being FM chair next year. Concerned that nobody is stepping up to provide continuity in repeaters once the new machines are in place. Work is being done, but nobody wants to be "in charge". Worried that records, drawings, history will not be kept up. Would pick it up in a couple months, and start learning what's happening right away.

Bill will talk to Bernard and Gary to discuss taking this step. He would have to leave at least the Net Manager position.

Gary presented DUES proposal that was e-mailed (just before the meeting) to the board. Proposed 2-tier, \$12 and \$24 for PDF and Printed Exciter.

Announcements:

KF4RTX - Ashby KB5ZIH has resigned as webmaster.

KG4CXR - needs someone to take Member Services for June meeting. Lynn volunteered.

KE4PAX - has list of old members not renewed in a few years. Send them a renewal? It's been done - Denyse sent them a post card.

Meeting ajourned at 10:10 PM 5/15/2001

**The Wake County ARES Net meets
Thursday at 9:00 PM on the 146.88
Repeater**

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Snapshots



Cyndi Picks a Winner!

Current President Tim KFRTX and ex-President Cyndi KD4ACW at the June meeting. Cyndi's picking a name from the basket for a door prize

Mike Checks in

Mike WD4MGP checks into the Orange County ARES net from the State EOC NC4EO. Every Saturday morning, the net does a check of it's members' ARES beepers. Even if we had one, we don't think it'd go off in this Cold War era Faraday cage!

On the Cover

From left to right, top to bottom: Mike WD4MGP, Tom N4TAB, John KG4HDT and Will N4GT1 all pitch in to make a big hole through a layer of brick and cinder block in the 'penthouse' wall on the roof at the State EOC. This is the beginning of a safe path for our antenna and rotor cables to come into the building from the lightning-protection box.

Hamfest Calendar

July 21: Cary Swapfest
July 28: Western Carolina Hamfest
August 11: Fayetteville
Sept 1: Shelby
Sept 22-23: Virginia Beach



Courtesy of the SERA Repeater Journal

